

Answer to the letters addressed to Commissioner Kyprianou concerning the establishment of maximum amounts in food supplements

In the context of the exercise for the establishment of maximum and minimum amounts of vitamins and minerals in foodstuffs and in particular in food supplements, several letters have been addressed to Commissioner Kyprianou.

With this answer we provide a collective reply to all letters.

First of all, the Directorate General Health and Consumer Protection would like to emphasize that the main aim of the food supplements Directive is to ensure that food supplements placed on the market are safe and provide a wide choice to consumers to supplement their diet.

Moreover, it is important to note that food supplements are regulated as food and are intended for supplementing the normal diet rather than having therapeutic effects. In fact, claims as to treatment, cure or prevention of disease would not be allowed for food supplements and would place the product under the legal framework of medicines.

We can confirm that we have initiated the works for the establishment of the maximum amounts of vitamins and minerals in food supplements, as foreseen by Article 5 of the abovementioned Directive, where the criteria to be considered in this exercise are also listed.

We have recently published a discussion paper on the establishment of maximum and minimum amounts of vitamins and minerals in foods where we have identified the issues to be considered and invited all interested parties to provide their view by 30 September 2006¹.

We are currently analysing the answers received².

Furthermore, we can reassure that in this exercise of setting the maximum levels for vitamins and minerals in food supplements at Community level, we will consider with the utmost care all existing national rules and will endeavour to incorporate in the measures as much flexibility as is compatible with the principles of the internal market.

¹ http://ec.europa.eu/food/food/labellingnutrition/supplements/discus_paper_amount_vitamins.pdf

² http://ec.europa.eu/food/food/labellingnutrition/supplements/resp_discus_paper_amount_vitamins.htm